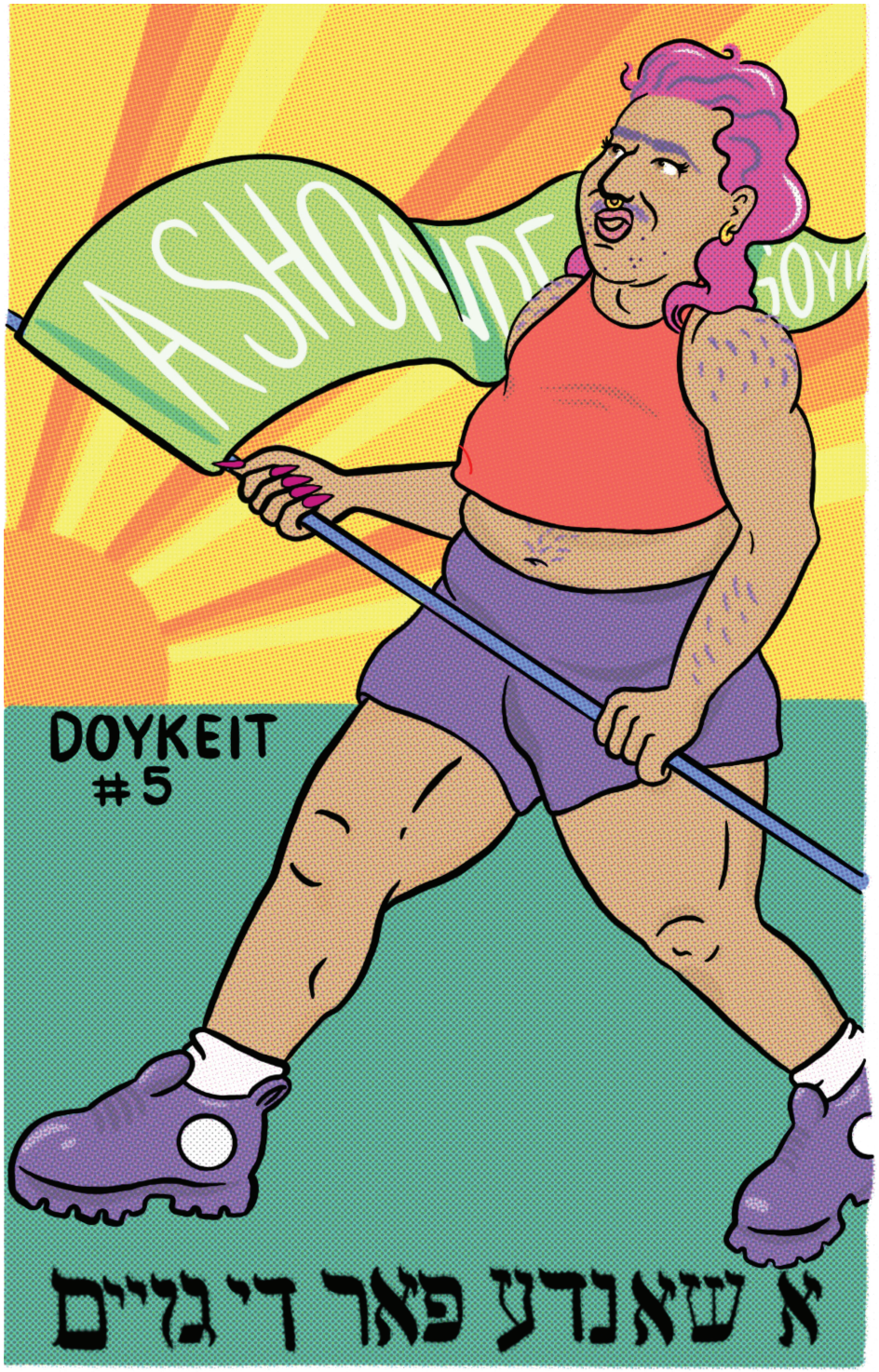
Shterna Goldbloom
Treif, baby queer self portrait, 2014

cc BY NC SA



Dear Reader,

have you ever been called self-hating? Self-loathing, a kapo, a quisling, or a fake Jew? Have you ever been called a shonde? A "Holocaust-denying piece of shit"? Oh wait this one is good– a "replicating virus on the body of decent discourse and education"? Trigger warning on this one– a "fucking faggot…disgusting anti-Semitic tranny freak…fucking tranny Nazi"? Dear reader, this is the shonde fur die goyim issue. The Yiddish term means to be a really fucking embarrassing Jew, to dishonor the Jewish people, to be a scandal in front of gentiles, to be a disgrace before the nations of the world. In the tradition of the great Jewish punk band The Shondes, we (queer, trans, anti-Zionist, freaky deaky Jews) can reclaim being a shame– to our families, to our shuls, to the idea of who or what we were supposed to be. But a SHONDE FUR DIE GOYIM? That's a whole different situation. That's a Stephen Miller, Jared Kushner, Ben Shapiro, Alan Dershowitz, Sheldon and Miriam Adelson kind of situation. That's an apartheid state situation. Shame is in the eye of the beholder, but also, shaming is a really powerful political tool and I'm definitely not telling you to keep calling Eve Barlow "Eve Fartlow" until the end of time.

The last issue of this zine was published in 2018– in the great tradition of a zine that comes out roughly every two years, there have been, to put it mildly, upheavals. I think a quick succession of crises is the ground we stand on, and the best we can do is to pull out the red string and thumbtacks and make the connections that allow us to see the underlying structures and systems that need to be reimagined or abolished. Try not to get whiplash.

Since I published the "We Will Outlive Them" issue, we have spent years in the grip of a global pandemic. As I write, there is a war happening in Ukraine that, on top of maybe starting the nuclear apocalypse and definitely creating a(nother) massive refugee crisis, is destabilizing one of the largest Jewish communities in the world (who are being used to settle stolen Palestinian land under the guise of international aid from Israel). Feel free to insert whatever horrific turn of events you're thinking about today here.

been interested in painting trash (well, recyclables), especially receipts, which are an oddly political kind of trash.// Tyler Vile is a writer, performer, and organizer from Baltimore, MD whose novel-in-verse, Never Coming Home, is available on Topside Press. She is a founding member of Hinenu: The Baltimore Justice Shtiebl, a radically inclusive synagogue. Her work has appeared in the Lambda Literary Award nominated anthology, Resilience, published by Heartspark Press, as well as the magazines Femmescapes, Beltway Poetry Quarterly, and Rogue Agent.// Mistress Fox lives in NYC, following their ancestors footsteps as a Hersherin (Dominatrix) and Yiddishistke.// Liel is deeply in love with Judaism, queerness, and the magic that connects them. They also love shabbos glitter and soup, the color orange, creating big art with loves, and feeling the Olam Ha'baness (the world to come) that exists in Olam Ha'ze (the current world).// Anji is an ill tumtum golem made of clay and spit, currently animated in Oakland, California. They like ink and lizards and butter; hate linear time and coffee.// Raizelle Stranger is a queer jewish artist born & raised in the SF Bay Area, currently residing in the Pacific Northwest. Raizelle is interested in the tension between public and private spaces. Through engagement with various modes of storytelling—personal narratives, short stories, and community organizing resonance spaces—she has found it necessary to address the personal as a way to critique larger systems of oppression. She believes that in defining ourselves and our experiences we are connected through our joys and pains to the lives of others. Work can be found at strangerrose.com// Rebecca Katz (she/her) is an artist and educator from Brooklyn, NY. Rebecca operates from a foundational belief that everyone is creative. She's focused on bringing the creative process to all aspects of movement building and as a space for people to reflect on their connection to social justice, identity, and place. Rebecca draws comics for Lilith Magazine about family, Judaism, trans-generational trauma, and food.// Claire is a rabbinic student with the IISHJ who spent the past year writing a thesis about diasporism.//Shterna Goldbloom is a OTD feygele artist and educator based in Chicago, IL.// virgil b/g taylor is a new york faggot living in Germany. He makes fag tips, an online speculative zine. He is one half of sssssssssSsss, a study-friendship with Ashkan Sepahvand, and a member of What Would An HIV Doula Do?, a collective of artists, writers, caretakers, activists and more gathered in response to the ongoing HIV/AIDS pandemic. His work explores histories of care and crisis, magic and toxicity.// Rosza Daniel Lang/Levitsky is a cultural worker and organizer living on the northern estuary of lenapehoking. Third-generation radical; second-generation queer – never figured out how to make art for art's sake; rarely wants to work alone. Just another gendertreyf diasporist mischling fem who identifies with, not as. Some current projects: abolition feminist organizing with Survived & Punished NY; making NYC's radical purimshpil with the Aftselokhes Spectacle Committee; singing with Koyt Far Dayn Fardakht (https://koytfilth.band) and solo (https://rozele.bandcamp.com); co-editing a collection of contemporary Yiddish song (with Zoë Aqua & Adah Hetko); helping revitalize the Tsentrale Yidishe Kultur-Organizatsye (https://friendsofcyco.org). Always writing, performing, teaching, learning, and more: https://meansof.org.// JB Brager is a transsexual and a faggot making comics, zines and trouble wherever they wander. https://www.jbbrager.com/

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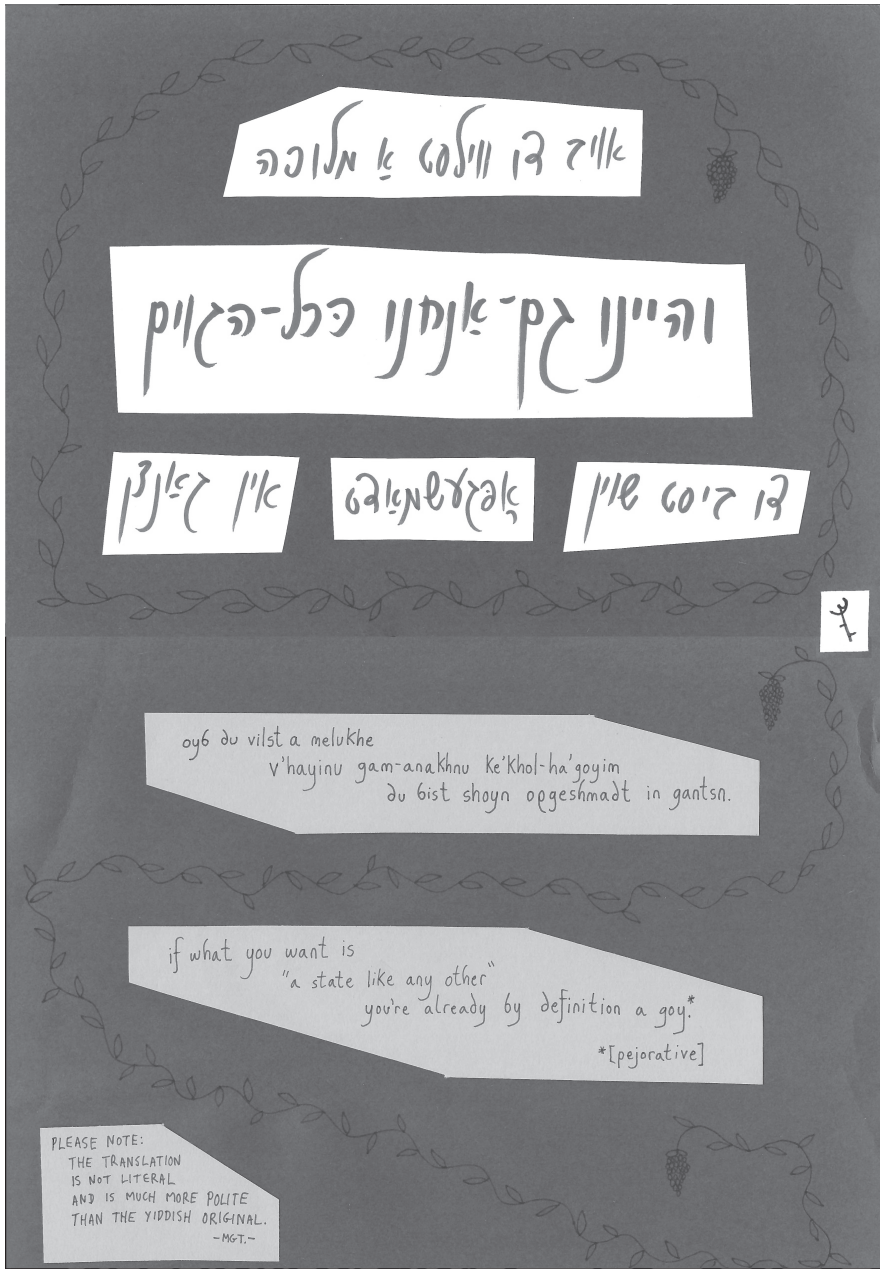


Contributors:
Ezra Levinson is a high school student working to navigate place and history as a Jew in Hawaii. More about Ezra at ezra.website. // Mira Schlosberg is a writer, cartoonist and editor living and working on Kumeeyay land. Mira is the author of two comic books - Guidebook to Queer Jewish Spirituality (2018) and Kugel Western (2021) - both published by Glom Press.// Rabbanit Eyshes Chayil has sicced the ancestors on Jacob Frey, may it really suck for him.// Josh Ascherman is a poet and artist based in Brooklyn. He has recently

Diaspora comes from the Greek dia sperein, "to scatter across". We imagine ourselves as seeds, but there are no guarantees for us. From New York to Hawai'i, we live on the backs of indigenous people. We decry colonialism in Israel/Palestine - what will we do about it at home?
"THERE, WHERE WE LIVE, THERE IS OUR HOMELAND"

Ezra Levinson, There Where We Live

In the last couple of issues our submissions have reflected an increasing awareness of settler colonial dynamics and a turn towards the language of de-colonization and Palestinian indigeneity both in this zine and in the U.S./ English-speaking context of Palestine solidarity organizing. In response, we've seen the rise of a counter-discourse that presents Jews as indigenous, and Israel as a decolonizing project that represents native sovereignty in a previously colonized homeland. A shameful shout-out to hasbarists and shondes Hen Mazzig, Rudy Rochman, and Mahrinah von Schlegel. The editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, Jeffrey Goldberg, said in 2019, "a 'dead' people came back to life and returned home, much as if the Seminole Indians were to return to Florida and claim it as their own land…the Jews are the Indians, and the Arabs, the Palestinians, the cowboys." (For more on this, see my comic "When Settler Becomes Native" in the Fall 2021 issue of Jewish Currents.) We've seen an uptick in attempts to discipline anti-Zionist Jews through targeted attacks on employment and social media harassment–alongside the targeting of Palestinians particularly in academic spaces.

Since I published the ""We Will Outlive Them" issue, I was fired from my job as a high school history teacher for, and this is basically a direct quote from the meeting where I was fired, "making Zionists feel unsafe." The primary evidence of this was, dear reader, a tweet that I posted on my at-the-time locked account, in which I invited friends to come over for Chanukah latkes, with the appended very hilarious joke, "No Zionists." After I was fired, the head of school referred to me in a staff meeting as "indefensible." My mother has said that I am like accidentally giving aid and comfort to Hamas terrorists, basically (not latkes, though). Dear reader, unfortunately I have made many latkes for Zionists in my life. It's a hazard of complex Jewish family dynamics.

Dear reader, there are things that I would tell you but alas I have signed a non-disparagement clause.

Maybe because I'm really emotionally exhausted, I wanted this issue to be a little snarkier, to have a little more shit-talking in it, a little more of that off-color Jewish humor we get from a Lenny Bruce, or a Morgan Bassichis, or an Eli Valley, for example. Some of the submissions do that, and some of them celebrate being the other (good, hot) type of shonde, or continue thinking through what it looks like to definitely not be a shonde fur die goyim– to think about what we disavow, to continue the conceptualization of diasporist Jewish life, to participate in decolonization, to expand on the ideas of doykeit.

The morning that I was fired, the Free Beacon published an article by some random guy titled "'No Zionists' and 'No Straights': Tweets From Teacher Rattle Elite New York City School" which focused not only on my supposed anti-semitism but also my "hostility toward straight people" and position as "an advocate for the legalization of prostitution." They additionally noted that I use "they" (them was nowhere to be found) pronouns but refused to use them, instead using my last name consistently throughout the piece. I am remarking on this because of the notable overlap between Zionist activists and anti-trans activists, and the general disturbing presence of Jewish people at the forefront of the present "gender critical movement." For example, Substack star Bari Weiss. Judith Butler in conversation with Jules Gleeson (The Guardian, Sept 2021) pointed out a trend that we've been seeing for a while– "... trans-exclusionary feminists have allied with rightwing attacks on gender…The anti-gender ideology is one of the dominant strains of fascism in our times." Which is to say, transphobia makes for a quick slip and slide from "liberal feminist" to straight up fascist (begging the question, what was the difference to begin with). Zionism and transphobia have led to all kinds of weird bedfellows. May the pens of Batya Ungar-Sargon and Bret Stephens be clogged, may Abigail Shrier and Jesse Singal be deplatformed and forgotten, amen.

Doykeit, as ever, is a submissions based zine that asks folks to think about the intersections of Jewish identity, queerness, and an anti-Zionist or Palestinian solidarity politic. As a zine project, it is a space for people

and a blue ceiling, a marble plaque on the back wall lists the Jews from the congregation who died fighting for Germany in the first World War. Sconces with Magen David and mourning ribbons dot the walls. To the right of the main door hangs a painting.

In the center of the city, through the heart of Bremen, is a lasting trace of the empty process of denazification after the war. In the Jewish cemetery, along the same wall as the chapel, are half-used family graves that stop just before the outbreak of war.

The historian and I recognize that the painting is of the Kaiserbrücke, the bridge that Bürgermeister-Smidt-Brücke replaced after the older bridge was destroyed at the end of the war. She is the only person I've met in Bremen who would have seen that bridge. I know it only from the pictures I studied in the archives. The intensely colored scene depicts a huddled crowd held back on the bridge by guards, unable to enter. In the corner is a signature that will so far lead me nowhere. I came to the cemetery after I asked a question, why in 1947 the city officials picked Johann Smidt and named the road from the back of the Überseemuseum, across the Wallanlagen and Am Brill for him? I found no answers to my question, but here I've found the bridge again, in a painting hanging in the cemetery at the edge of the city.

beyond what I imagined see could have the capacity to have. What I saw when I was there were all the mistakes and pulls towards power and away from life. What I saw then I was there was this kind of undoing, this kind of undone turn against you and turn against me. This vast space without any remaining understanding. the stones were broken. The names rubbed away by forgetting. The stones were used to mark visits. I felt it, and then could not even begin to see it.

Two: Fall 2020

There are two books in Bremen's Staatsarchiv called "Bürgermeister Smidt und die Juden". One was written by a Nazi, the other by a child of the war. The archivist at the Staatsarchiv attempts an answer to my question about the places in Bremen named for Bürgermeister Johann Smidt. She mumbles, "maybe the city officials appointed to replace the Nazis didn't care about how he felt about the Jews, and anyways his antisemitism was different because…." I nod and go back to the books about Smidt's antisemitism. It's clear already that I might never find an answer to my question among the Germans in Bremen, just half-truths and excuses. There's a plaque next to the massive marble statue of Smidt in the Rathaus that mentions his commitment to removing Jewish people from public life in Bremen after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The statue still stands. Nothing I can find in the archives answers why, after the war, the second bridge over the Weser was re-named for Smidt.

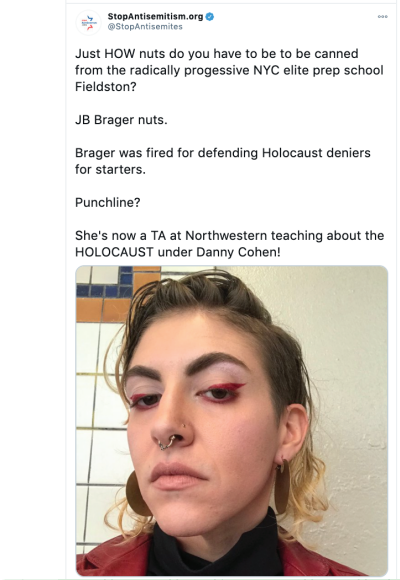
The historian studied ethnology in Berlin and wrote a book with the same title as the Nazi book. Her book is fair towards the people who Smidt hated and does not imagine that we can learn any positive lessons from the mayor. I tell her that I speak some German but that it's hard for me. Our conversation switches between German and English and I understand only so much. She finishes her small bottle of coke in the Mitte café we find after learning the museum was closed that day. She apologizes that she doesn't have any more copies of her book on Bremen's Jewish history, but I assure her that I can find it in the library. A few months pass, and she writes to ask if I'd like to visit the small, nineteenth-century Jewish cemetery in the Bremen suburb of Hastedt. She is kind to me, generous with her time, but I admit that I am still troubled by her interest.

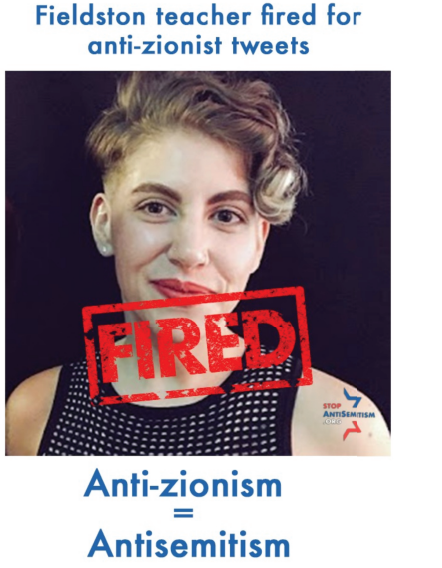
When we finally make it out to the cemetery in late October, we meet a gardener. He asks if I speak German, Russian, or Hebrew. I explain, in my simple German, that I am Jewish, a student, here to research the history of the Jewish community in Bremen. He smiles and says it is okay for me to take some pictures. Later, he asks if we would like to have a look inside the chapel at the back of the cemetery. The historian, despite many years of studying this place, had never been inside, was never invited. Later, I would find a picture of this building burning in 1938. The brick building is like the brick churches found in and around Bremen, but with a Star of David mounted high on the facade. Inside are simple, white walls

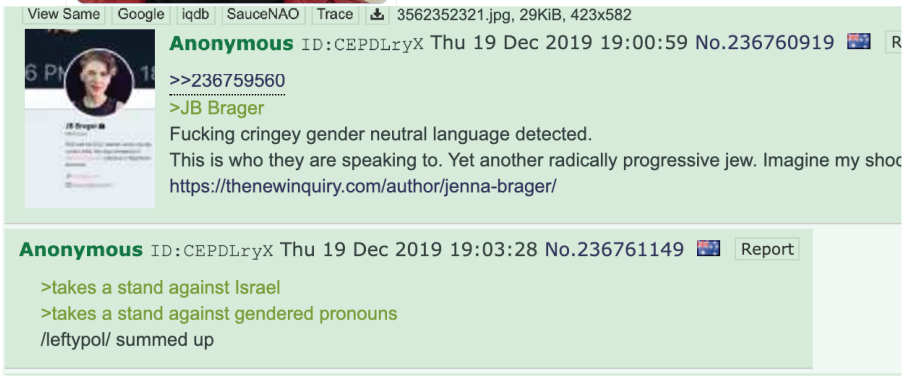
who identify with Jewishness to think about what it means to reclaim our religion or culture from Zionism. This is outside of the project of Palestinian liberation, which is urgent and dire and should be centered in our political energies. Nevertheless, imagining and envisioning a Jewish future after Israel is crucial and a matter of survival for us. When I started making this zine, being an anti-Zionist Jew felt like a dirty secret. Now, it feels like the tides have turned. Who's the shonde now, bitch.

This introduction only reflects my own opinions, not those of anyone else in this zine and definitely not my employer because they fired me.

JB Brager, Spring 2022


StopAntisemitism.org
@StopAntisemites
Just HOW nuts do you have to be to be canned from the radically progessive NYC elite prep school Fieldston?
JB Brager nuts.
Brager was fired for defending Holocaust deniers for starters.
Punchline?
She's now a TA at Northwestern teaching about the HOLOCAUST under Danny Cohen!





Two Cemeteries

virgil b/g taylor

One: Winter 2019

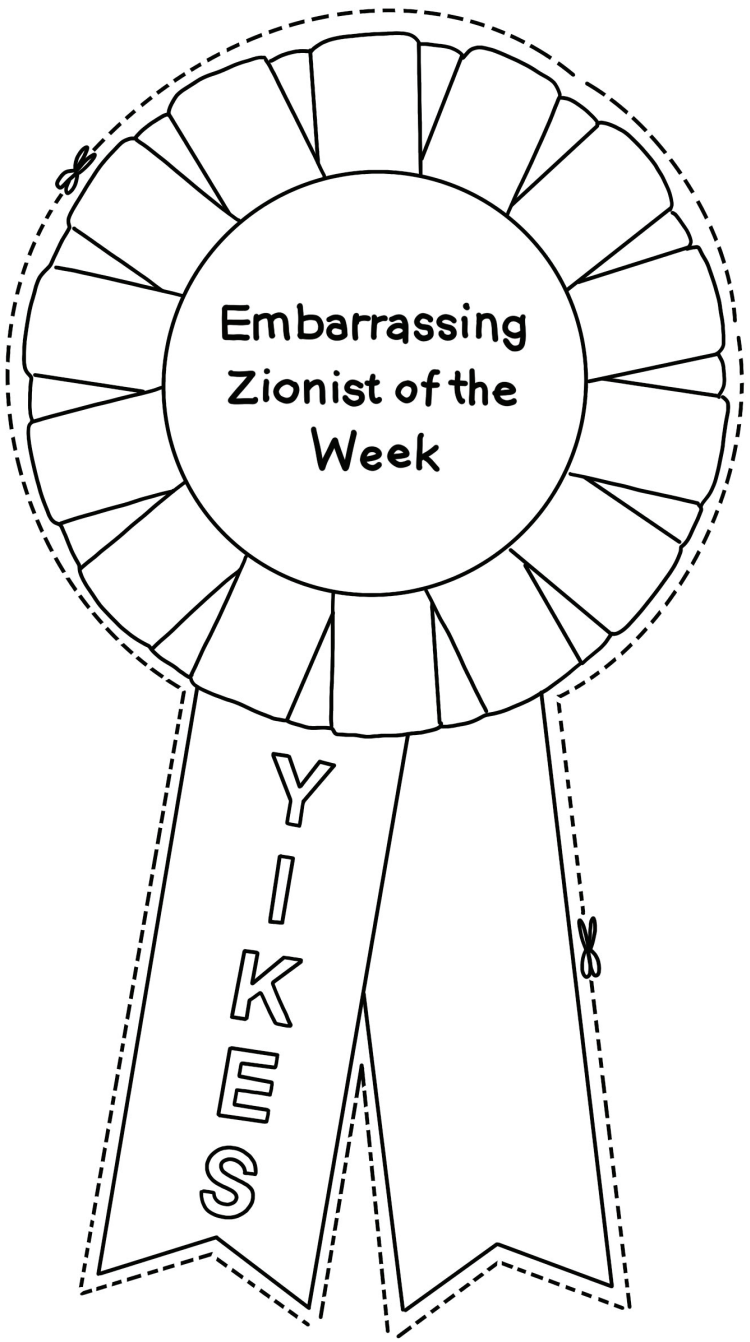
I imagine that it is difficult to face the land you grew up in, just as I struggle to face the land I was raised in. study, for all its capacity to engage, maintains an important capacity for alienation. This land is my land, this land is your land. For centuries, my people were without land. Yet we lived among you, lived in the pale, the border, the marches, edges. starting in the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries a new vision for who or what should hold the sovereignty of a state began to take form. With the death of divine kings came the (false) clarity of the nation-state. The kind of sorting that nineteenth-century science was so good for, for each their own. But there those who did not so neatly fit within those bounds. Many of these groups were long ago killed off. Gone without any trace. trouble made and trouble taken. But some groups persisted in spite of troubling this new nation-state category.

I must imagine you are troubled when you look at the place you grew up in and know that it is crisscrossed with myths about who lives there and what is there and when it's from, and who it's for. I know that you must be very troubled.

Before these years of pandemics and now war, I went with a friend on a trip to Warsaw. we stayed in a light-filled apartment just off a grand soviet street which, to me, seemed impossibly long and lined with impossibly imposing buildings. We met with leftwing artists who told us about all that they had been building in the years past was starting to crumble. We took the train one day to Lodz, a city I had long wanted to visit since working with the museum there on a project at an old job. I decided a few days before, without much thought, that we should visit the Jewish Cemetery. It wasn't until I got on the train from Warsaw to Lodz that I began to read, and to understand that it would not be a simple visit to another city, a quick walk through a probably somewhat abandoned graveyard. There are many ways to explain the horror of what unfolded in Lodz during the nazi occupation. Perhaps explain is the wrong term, better "account for" or "reckon with".

I cannot yet speak of that space, but I know that the image chased me for at least a year before I heard it and that when I was there I could not even begin to see the totality of it. Or rather, like all such places, there was an infinity of fine distinctions between its various parts. There is nothing to say of all the places and all the ways and manners and turns and mistakes. It crumbles and the trees are counted, tied with that cloth textured plastic which is ubiquitous yet I could not tell you anything about it. the survey seemed to continue forever. The other ones were well cared for, manicured, rolling hills, electric blue, and bright yellow flowers. although we came to this place knowing what made it, what lines were drawn, and which choices were taken. We knew that it was left like this, but seeing it like this was

Cut, color, and shame!



moving beyond the dichotomies of "here" and "there." The meaning of doikayt has stretched from literal "hereness" to long-distance Palestine solidarity, to anything associated with the new Jewish left. A teacher I know as Eliyahu reminded me that "none of us should be here" – here, on this continent – except those who are indigenous - and that there is no diasporism without acknowledging the legacy of chattel slavery. Dev Noily and Jews on Ohlone Land taught me what local, relational decolonial solidarity looks like. I learned that olam haba isn't escapist or eschatological, and that when we orient ourselves away from Zion, we also reorient ourselves in time.

A rabbi with whom I study has suggested that diasporism is a result of the comfort 5th-generation Jewish Americans feel with their Americanness: they no longer "need" Israel. I disagree: the diasporist generation is the generation who came of age under Trump, who take antisemitism for granted and argue over how to fight it, who know the stakes of solidarity, who extend that solidarity to Palestine–and withdraw it from structures of power.

The American Jewish "consensus" on Israel, to the degree it ever existed, has shattered. The diasporist generation has arrived. The future is diasporist. As the nascent institutions of diasporism arise, and power begins to shift – between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and between the Jordan and the Mediterranean – what might new arrangements of power look like? And much will they really need of the diasporic past?

Anji Bodony, Shake Until Cloudy

thing to do with my father being from Brooklyn, where the Dodgers were the national religion. What I learned in Hebrew school, I concluded, was fresh and shiny and correct, and our way at home was old, decrepit, wrong, outdated, the "aw"s and "s"s covered in cobwebs, disintegrating like my grandmother's Yiddish songbook.

In a line of questioning I still struggle to understand, a Hebrew School teacher asked me and my pre-teen classmates: If there were to be a war between the United States and Israel, on which side would we fight? While I may not have said it aloud, to myself I quietly declared my neutrality. I wouldn't fight at all, because I was a preteen pacifist.

I spent a semester in Haifa in college, because my father had been too afraid to let me go in high school. My host sister during my 6 week stay at a kibbutz was planning to become a conscientious objector; I believed in a negotiated peace agreement. I read Operation Shylock the semester I returned, as the Second Intifada began.

I moved to Brooklyn/Lenape land two weeks before the Twin Towers fell. The subway stopped in the tunnel underwater between boroughs that morning, for an indeterminate amount of time. I walked home from Manhattan that day across one of the bridges with hundreds of others. The sky was bright blue behind the clouds of smoke - like so many clouds of smoke in so many other places before and after, wrought by planes paid for with my tax dollars.

Devastated, I dreamed a diasporic pastfuture: dusting off the cobwebs and my violin, I would be a prophet of Ashkenaz, and the "aw"s and "s"s would save us all. I was 15 years too early, and 60 years too late. The past may have been diasporic, but the future is diasporist.

In a car on the way home from a protest against the invasion of Iraq, I was schooled in anti-Zionism. I spent over a decade processing that conversation, learning that neutrality and Yiddish weren't enough.

Kaye/Kantrowitz writes, "I name this ideology and practice *Diasporism* as a deliberate counter to Zionism."

In the 'oughts, Yiddishists and anti-Zionists eyed each other curiously across a chasm of unknown depth. I saw the connection, but it's the diasporist generation that made it real.

Diasporists have woven strands of the secular Yiddishist left seamlessly with fervent Hasidic practice. I spent most of the pandemic interviewing diasporists on Zoom, humbled, awed, and brought to tears repeatedly. I learned from Batya Levine's *Karov* that diasporist music can be sweet, in major keys, in English, and still very Jewish. This zine reminded me that there is no diasporism without decolonization. Devin Naar taught me about Edgar Morin's "multi-rootedness," or "*polienrasinamyento*" as Julian González Beltrez suggests translating it to Ladino,

Adar II, 5782

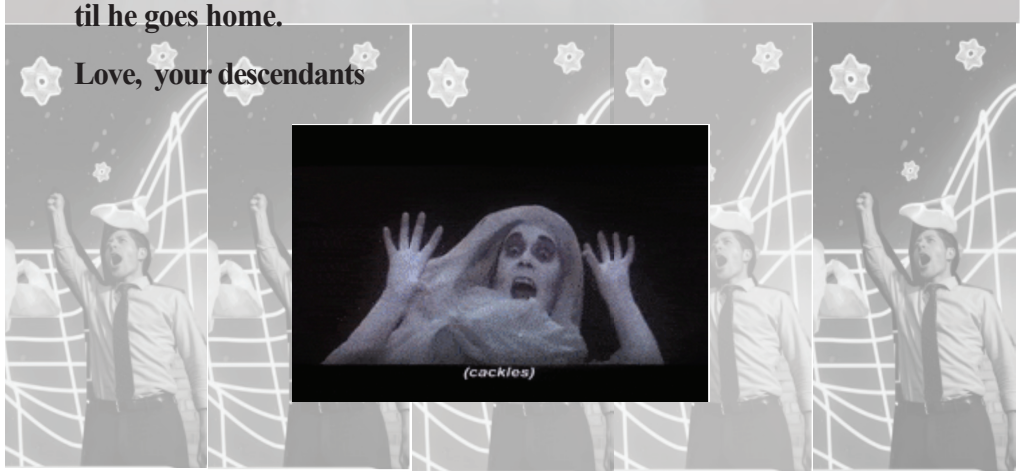
Dear Ancestors,

We are hoping you could do us a favor and haunt Jacob Frey. This guy, the "mayor" of "minneapolis" is Jewish, and it hurts our neshamas. If you have a free night, could you please appear in his dreams and torture him with a deep reckoning of his profound betrayal of our people?

We know you're busy giving Jewish Republicans gallstones but please save some kidney disease for neoliberal democrats. You may remember from being alive the treachery when Jews get in bed with Empire. That's why we want you to get in bed, at night, with Jacob Frey, and fill him, mind, body, and spirit, with the knowledge and felt sense that all his actions, and everything he represents, embodies an undermining of the possibilities of justice, solidarity, and a liveable planet outside of the racist police state. Oh, and please let him know his face and voice grate like shredded potatoes, and his shirts are dumb.

Ancestors, we know that most of you hate cops. We know you most of you hate developers. We feel you when we organize, march, sing, bake, fuck, laugh, and dance. Please drive Jacob Frey all the way out of his damn mind, til he goes home.

Love, your descendants



Seven Dubiously Related Thoughts on Jewishness and Abstraction

Josh Ascherman

1. Last summer, I ran into the younger sister of a famous Zionist "journalist" (Substack star) in the park. I grew up with the sister. Although I was wearing a mask, she recognized me from far away, and called out to me. I was embarrassed for several reasons: one, because I am gay, and am always embarrassed by Zionists and straight people—which I know because there are some of both in my family. Two, I had my dog, who is a *goy*. I said to myself, *I hope she doesn't invite me over for Shabbos*. She did.

2. There is something embarrassing about figuration, all the time, but especially the expressive kind. That's why R. B. Kitaj is so charming—he's not embarrassed at all. Neither is Philip Guston, though his work really is embarrassing.

3. Ilya Bolotowsky's work is lesser-known but neurotic as fuck. It's hard to know if he was embarrassed because there was only ever one really big show of his work, at the Guggenheim in 1974, which was panned in *Artforum*. But he seems pretty earnest to me in interview.

4. Recently I've been drawing and painting receipts. I've come up with lots of reasons why they're interesting to me but the truth is it tickles me to prolong the experience of watching my money go away. It's an anxious pleasure, like picking a scab.

5. One time (last week), one of my uncles tried to compliment his wife and ended up talking about how he'd once had dinner with Henry Kissinger, "the smartest person he'd ever met." His wife, he said, was the "smartest woman he'd ever met," but it sounded a little bit like Kissinger was the one he really wanted. Either way, there was a miscommunication somewhere in the cultural process and Kissinger became, for the eldest member of my dad's family, the quintessential red-blooded American man. His (my uncle's) wife's a goy. I sometimes think my family came out of a Philip Roth novel.

6. I have always held most tightly to the parts of my family history that are farthest away from Europe. When I think about Ilya Bolotowsky, I remember that my affinity for my mother's family's tenuous connection to South America is just disguised longing to be red-blooded and American, following a template that isn't real.

7. In my family you don't have to have politics at all as long as you're good at talking, and that's why I've grown up to be such a literal person. Abstraction is a promised land, queerness is a promised land, and both work for me that way.

The Future is Diasporist

Claire Bergen

I first learned the term "diasporism" from Philip Roth's 1993 [novel] *Operation Shylock*, assigned in my undergraduate sociology course on Global Diasporas, in which the protagonist, a fictionalized Philip Roth, discovers someone in Israel masquerading as him and working to "return" all of the Jews to Poland (I don't recall what he intended to do with the majority of Jews who were not from Poland). Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz writes in *The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism* that she was unaware of *Operation Shylock* when she first began to use the word.

The first Yiddish song my father taught me to play on my violin was Avrom Goldfaden's popular theater lullaby Rozhinkes mit Mandlen, from a worn, sepia-toned songbook that was his mother's: "In the temple, in a corner of a chamber/The widow The Daughter of Zion is sitting all alone./As she rocks her only son Yidele to sleep/She sings him a pretty song, a lullaby." (translation from https://yiddish-lyrics.wordpress.com/2007/12/13/rozinkes-mit-mandlen) When I came home from Hebrew school in the early 90s and excitedly shared with my father what I'd learned, he was confused: I pronounced the words wrong.

In my west coast Conservative synagogue where the rabbi wished congregants "a hearty ma-ZAL tov," the only piece of liturgy still recited in Ashkenazi pronunciation was the mourner's kaddish: "yiskadal v'yiskadash, sh'mey rabaw..." At home we said "rush-a-shawna" and "yum kipper," and I thought it maybe had some-

So, You're Related to Alan Dershowitz?

Tyler Vile

One day, early on in the pandemic, you're on an endless scroll through Facebook. You stop cold when you see that your cousin, an author and generally reliable source of information about family history, says that she just found out she's related to Alan Dershowitz. Yep, The Dersh. Trump lawyer, right-wing talk show putz, and guy who looks like he stepped out of an antisemetic cartoon from the 1930s, sniffing money and laughing maniacally.

It might not be that bad, you think. Maybe he's a cousin by marriage, a distant relative several times removed from the days of the shtetl. Nope, he's a full-blooded, direct relative going back to your great-great grandfather. You could lament the cruel irony of genealogy, but let's be real. You've been estranged from your abusive family of origin for almost a decade, and the cousins you still keep in touch with are friendly acquaintances at best.

One of those cousins, a rabbi outside of Philly, corroborates this story. She says that her father, a world-renowned surgeon who once saved the life of the Lubadvitcher Rebbe, also saved Dershowitz's father's life in the 1970s. There is no escaping The Dersh. The fact that he comes from the same stock as your union organizing great-grandmother, a lineage of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire survival and socialist agitation, just burns you up inside. And yet, the cousins you spent every Rosh HaShanah, Passover, and Thanksgiving with were dyed in the wool, Fox News watching Republicans. It's not that much of a stretch, hon.

You know in your heart of hearts that the great-grandmother you've mythologized as the Yiddish-speaking balabusta who escaped an arranged marriage, came to this country with nothing, and fought for freedom and justice was an entire, complex person who you never got to meet. When your grandmother died last August, you learned this again. She was secretary of her union until the day she died, she was a nurse during World War II, an avid Scrabble player, and, most importantly, she never laid a finger on you. You hold the memory, real or imagined, of kind, fierce, Jewish feminist labor activists close to your heart. You see yourself in that. It's hard not to. You can't help but let thoughts of your rapist father, your far-right great-uncle, and Alan fucking Dershowitz sink their teeth into the memory, or the dream, that you cherish so much.

Do you need your family to be good? No, you think, but you want at least some relatives who aren't complete shitbags. You could wax poetic about DNA and generational trauma or you could accept that this shmendrik who makes headlines defending the shmendrik of all shmendriks is a close relative by blood, but a distant one by association. You feel embarrassed by Alan Dershowitz. You feel responsible, in a way, for Alan Dershowitz, and there is nothing you can do to stop him. For all the stock you've put into chosen family, you have to admit that blood relatives do matter. You are not related to heroes or monsters, you are related to people. You relearn this, and it is painful every time.

A few words in Yiddish and English from a Jewish sex worker

Mistress Fox

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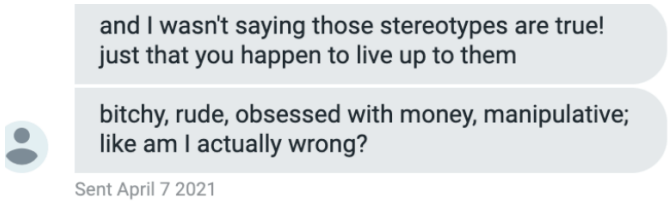
di kurve the whore
a woman who acknowledges her passions
di yidene the Jewess the Jewish woman
ignorant overbearing
let's face it: every woman is one
-Irena Klepfisz, *Etlekhe verter oyf mame-loshn*/A few words in the mother tongue


and I wasn't saying those stereotypes are true!
just that you happen to live up to them
bitchy, rude, obsessed with money, manipulative;
like am I actually wrong?
Sent April 7 2021

-Conversation with a client on a paid platform

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I wish I could write this essay entirely in Yiddish. Then even fewer would read it, and my bube z"l would be proud. But what even is the Yiddish word for sex work? In a poem I love, Irena Klepfisz uses *di kurve* for whore, a seemingly false cognate to English, which to my anglophone ears still evokes the body—my body, back arched for a photo I'll use for my ad, with the text "Jewish American Pervert" as the tag line.

My bube's Yiddish dictionary offers *di zoyne* and the cognate *prostitut*. There is a tantalizing pen mark in the verb section between *far* and *koyft* (selling, assumedly in the reflexive)–I guess she had the same question I do. Maybe it was after we saw *Got fun nekome* (The God of Vengeance) at the New Yiddish Rep together. That was certainly the first time I saw a character on stage who was just like me in three crucial ways–Jewish, queer, and a sex worker.

In most of the play, the workers are merely *meidele*—girls. Working girls, girls who like girls. *Lesbiankes* (another word I learned from Klepfisz). The play was widely popular from its first showing in 1907 until 1923, when it was translated into English and debuted on Broadway. At the urging of a prominent reform Rabbi, among others, the entire cast and management were arrested, tried and convicted for obscenity.

The play depicted an on-stage lesbian kiss–fine when the mouths kissing have been speaking Yiddish, in a LES playhouse. But in English? *Shande*. I suspect this is what the gentiles objected to most. But I believe the rabbi probably most objected to the depiction of a Jewish patriarch as a brothel owner; Jews were often depicted as sex traffickers–"white slave traders." This slavery-obscuring, racist trope has now been pushed onto Black and Brown men, largely due to the collaboration of white Jews like the rabbi.

"You're wearing a kippah!" Chava raises a single eyebrow at her mom. Chava's dad sings louder, trying to cover their whispering. Mama shrugs and waves her hand dismissively, "We are all the same in the eyes of HaShem." Chava rolls her eyes at the irony. Mama joins with the congregation in reciting the verses.

The rabbi and cantor are deep in melody. The cantor's robes drape a thin frame, a rainbow tallit wraps her shoulders. Chava stands. Her body weak. She doesn't understand where all the elderly people in the room are getting their strength to stand. She holds the mahzor against her stomach, trying to stabilize herself. Women around her sway with their eyes closed, listening with smiles. Women sing out the prayers with no book at all. Chava lets the cantor's voice fill her head, her lungs, her stomach, legs, all the way to her fingertips. The first girl Chava ever kissed told her that she smelled like sunshine. Is it true? That you can fall in love everyday, and have your heart broken just the same. She thought so.

Mesmerized, Chava's eyes lock on the woman unleashing such deep tones, high tones, tones of love & struggle. Her pixie cut a fringe of brown around the white knit circle. Chava can't help but wonder about her short hair and rainbow shawl, and the way she seems to be smiling at Chava with her mouth full of verses, teeth on display as she sings.

The volume grows as the congregation joins in singing prayer. The melody sounds ancient, spooky & comforting, like balmy nights spent walking in a graveyard. You are alone but you are not. In the dips, swings, peaks of song are the cries of hope & despair uttered by ancestors. Chava's eyes close. The music flows through her. A warm voice like vanilla bread pudding. She salivates and swallows hard, willing her mouth to form words where she wishes for sweet cinnamon challah and raisins.

--Raizelle Stranger

Shterna Goldbloom, Mendeles Upshernish, 2020

Out in the heat of evening the sun stretches and yawns. Strobing blackness plays behind Chava's eyes, head a dizzy blur. She's momentarily paralyzed by the lack of blood rushing to her brain. Pavement and billboards, street lights and cars, form again in front of her. Wheels to the ground. Heels heavy. Stomach empty. Chava pushes—onward. Towards shul. Her parents would meet her there for the final Yom Kippur service. Mama had wanted Chava to attend earlier services with her, to ensure the quality of prayer. Chava did pray. With her whole self. Prayed that her board would hold her. That the air would steady her. That the sun would feed her what she couldn't eat. She was constantly practicing teshuvah in her own private way. Reflecting on the year past, returning to herself, she wonders: can wholeness still feel empty?

On the bus ride over Chava sat staring out the window at streets lined with tents, homes that people made with things found and things left to take. She caught glimpses of faces and exchanges, feet peaking out of tents and hands tending to shopping carts. Here people lived in the open, yet were ignored with open eyes passing on the street. On freeway entrances and exits, they were the veins of a city lying exposed. The pumping blood of people who were trying to survive. Chava's stomach growled. Guilt; to only know hunger for a few hours, to only know it voluntarily.

This hunger has emphasized a longing within her. She walks through the synagogue doors. Limbs heavy matching the solid oak. The room is filled with her people, though she has always felt a certain disconnect that comes when separation is stated. How can one group of people be chosen and others not? Her ancestors, the diaspora she is part of has a unique history yes, but persecution, exhile and genocide is not theirs alone. Neither is the incredible resilience, creativity and adaptability of their faith and culture. Chava looks at the congregation, she wonders: who belongs? Left out is where? She wonders about the ways in which descendants of great oppression can also oppress others. Lightheaded with thoughts swimming and darting around inside her, she refocuses.

Chava spots Mama immediately. Highlighted chestnut curls kept short, the ringlets Mama hates forming at the base of her neck. She recognizes her dad, a yarmulke floating atop puffy black hair. After college it was so long it became a shadow encircling his head. That was the 70s though and even white boys had afros. Well, Jewish hippies did.

Somehow Mama senses her hesitating in the doorframe. Mama turns her head. Her dark brown eyes, set in an earthy face, meet Chava's gaze, and she waves. Chava stuffs her hands in the front of her black hoodie and steps into their row, ignoring the disapproving stares of a gray haired lady and several spectacled men.

"Hi love" Mama greets her with a squeeze, as the congregation rises to their feet for the Ne'ilah service.

"Hi honey" her dad leans forward, flashing her a welcoming smile.

Mama's eyes sweep Chava up and down, a look of disapproval casting a shadow over her initial joy at seeing her daughter. Mama tugs the top of Chava's briefs that peak above the top of brown corduroy pants, Chava swats her hand away and adjusts her clothing. "Are you trying to look like a feygele?" Mama whispers loudly, leaning in towards Chava's ear, "I don't know why you even wear that boy's underwear."

At the top of the play, Yekel the patriarch says of his work-life balance:
My home must be kept apart from that place! ... Just like [treyf] and [kosher]!

This is my fear: that the true Yiddish word for who I am is *treyf*. I fear that it reflects badly on me that I am willing to engage the erotics of this identity at all, that being Jewish is sacred, being a sex worker is profane, and these parts of me belong far away from each other–or that I should not exist at all. And if I must, I should at least have the decency to stay quiet.

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Jewish. American. Pervert. Thus read my first tagline on my first adsite. Looking back on it, I'm not sure why I wanted my Jewishness so prominent in my Domme persona. It was by no means front and center of my vanilla life, but in my time on cam sites and at the commercial dungeon I had been working at, it seemed to be one of the first things people noticed about me anyway. Ironically, I have heard the question "are you Jewish?" more times at work than at the 14th street subway station where Chabad camps out.

The shameful truth is that sex work, and being fetishized, has been a thread binding me to my Jewishess until I was ready to embrace it. The obscenity of my identity, and the silence around it, was what finally forced me to speak through it. Famously, banning books can send them to the top of the bestseller list, much like social taboos get sublimated into fetishistic desire.

The God of Vengeance trial resulted in the first ever obscenity conviction in New York state. It was later overturned, but a hundred years later, I feel its legacy. I felt it when Maus was banned in schools for obscenity–the obscenity of naked mice, who represent the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. And when another online censorship bill, EARN IT, was introduced that may make online sex work even more difficult and precarious. If who I am and what I do inspires that much repression, it must be important.

Nu, it's a mixed blessing to be such an inspiration. I do wish I had been spared the email requesting to do a concentration camp roleplay (my paternal grandfather was a Holocaust survivor). Or the one from the Orthodox client who, at the height of the pandemic, refused to test or screen because "we are of the same tribe" and I should thus trust him implicitly. But I also have been able, with certain generous and enthusiastic participants, to discover myself, as a Jewish person, through play and pleasure. Maybe one day I'll share dirty details–then again, maybe just in Yiddish.

Yekel uses his brothel money to commission his own sefer torah; sex work has paid for my Yiddish courses, my shul dues. My first magen David was bought for me by a client. A tiny gold-plated star on a gold-plated chain, ordered with an Etsy gift card. After it arrived, I'd send him pictures of me wearing it and nothing else. For a price, of course. My second magen David I found at the bottom of my grandmother's underwear drawer. It's much larger—the first star rests inside it. I put them both on–*treyf* and *kosher* mingle on my neck. I take a selfie and post that I won't be online for shabbos. As the sun sets, I wrap up any remaining convos, turn off my lines, and go to light my candles.

Shabbos as Queer Home[land] by Liel Green

(Adapted from "Anticipatory Illuminations: The Performance of the Jewish Sabbath as Queer Futurity" ~~ email liel.c.green@gmail.com for a copy!!! Would love to share&dream&scheme w/ you)

As I prepare for Shabbos on Friday afternoons I feel myself moving towards *Olam Ha-ba* [The World to Come] in a mutual exchange of longing and desire. I let myself melt into the slowness of time and as my pace changes so does time itself. Performance studies scholar and queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz z"l theorizes queerness as something that is "not-yet-here,"[1] as an energy that exists in/ foreshadows the future yet to come. He names performances of queerness as "not simply a being, but a *doing* for and towards the future."[2]

I have fallen in deep, ever-becoming love with Shabbos as I have begun to recognize and name the entanglement between Muñoz's utopian vision of queerness and the traditional understanding of Shabbos as a "taste of *Olam Ha-ba*." As "more than a day of being," but rather, "a day of becoming,"[3] Shabbos allows us to fully immerse in an alternate time-space; our repeated rituals, prayers, and gatherings collaborate with and conduct queerness in their capacities to bring forth worlds from outside this present, radically different from the ones we know now to be home. It is in Shabbos's capacity to allow us to see and feel beyond this present, to really see and feel *Olam*

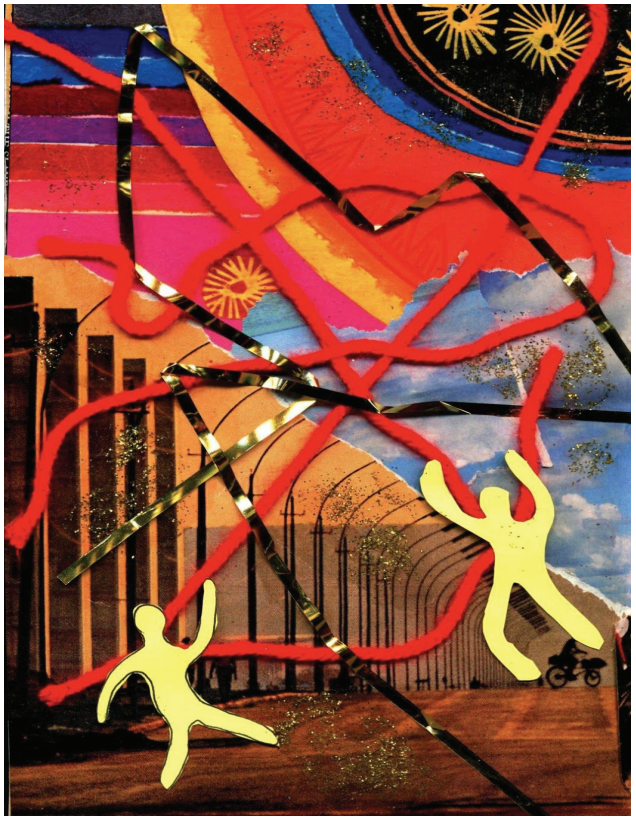
[1] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Irving Greenberg, *Guide to Shabbat*, (New York: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, 1981), 17.

Ever since I was very small, my mother met the sunsets on Friday night with a crisp tablecloth, tall candlesticks, and a spread of purple cabbage, challah, and eggplant. Waving hands over the candles seemed to physically usher in a peace, like the whole house warmed up with Shabbos. When I was young they taught me this was called the "Shabbos spice," angels descending upon our home to greet the Shabbos queen with us. I've since realized that the warmth I felt as a child was the way the people of my life would wind down together week after week, year after year. Over time, our home contracted and expanded, as children left and returned, sometimes bringing new friends and chosen family with them, but our Friday nights stayed constant. We flocked to the table, laughing at our bullshit weeks, razzing on each other, celebrating joys, sharing in griefs and heartbreaks, always with the same warm challah, eggplant and cabbage sprinkled with craisins and pickles. Shabbos began to feel like a hug I carried in my arms and could wrap other people in, wherever I went. Moving across cities and visiting new homes and communities, I've carried the Shabbos I knew to the spaces I didn't, challenging the traditions I knew to see how far I could stretch them. Shabbos has always been a way for me to connect with my family, but with this project, I wanted to explore how Shabbos could take me beyond the people and life I knew to find moments of overlap with the people I've chosen to make family with too — the queers, rabbis, artists, and heretics I want to break bread with.

--Shterna Goldbloom

that I can truly lean into this process of becoming and into the queerness that is not-yet-here. **For being queer *and* Jewish is relinquishing our grasp on what is and allowing ourselves to soften into, to fall in love with, and to feel what could be. We must release into the not-yet that exists in the moments in between. It is in these moments that we arrive home.**

Thank you to all those who have been a part of my writing&thinking&feeling-- I am in emergent love with you and your visions and it is because of you that I know and feel that there is so much more.



Ha-ba, that I understand the World to Come as a queer world.

Queerness is a transformative energy that ruptures and disrupts, collapses and makes whole. It engenders our lives with a sense of alterity that awakens us to the full range of what is possible beyond our present configurations. Shabbos's release *into* and *of* time enables us to feel what Alexis Pauline Gumbs calls, the "simultaneity of time."[4] **It is this "simultaneity of time," the temporal collapse of my desired future into the current present, that allows me to feel the warm and expansive sense of home, liberation, abundance, and pleasure inherent in my own experiences of Shabbos and queerness.**

As I enter into the temporal-space of Shabbos, I move closer towards home. In this movement, I feel myself actually arriving home. I soften into and concurrently feel what could be and already is. Shabbos is a home[land] created and nourished in and because of exile. Queers and Jews share materially/ historically rooted experiences of exile from original sites of home, land, hetero-family, etc. But what has perhaps more significantly enabled me to even begin to articulate the woveness that I feel between queerness, Shabbos, and home[land] are not just these materially/ historically rooted exilic experiences, but rather, the shared exile from dominant time, from the present, that queerness and Jewishness experience and demand. The future is the diaspora of the present for those exiled from the dominant present. Those in diaspora manage to

[4]Autumn Brown and Adrienne Maree Brown, Hosts, "A Breathing Chorus with Alexis Pauline Gumbs," How to Survive the End of the World (podcast), December 19, 2017, Accessed January 25, 2019, https://www.endoftheworldshow.org/blog/2017/12/19/a-breathing-chorus-with-alexis-pauline-gumbs.

continuously exist and build home in between "here" and "there," to feel connected to a "there" while still being "here." Shabbos itself has been described as a homeland,[5] created and felt in the liminal space between *here* [the present] and *there* [the future].

A deep and profound yearning for and orientation towards "Zion" permeates Jewish prayer. I *doven* towards a future arrival to Zion yet to come, rather than a return to a mytho-historic past that perhaps never was. I *doven/* desire towards an elsewhere home outside this present, an elsewhere that extends beyond just the material, that exists in time and through each other. Shabbos allows me to feel and build home in time each and every week. It provides rest from exile and longing by bringing what we desire into this present, even if only for a 25-hour period of time. Feeling this home on Shabbos has helped me articulate my own Jewish, queer longing for home that refuses to be satisfied by the establishment of an ethno-nation state on stolen Palestinian land.

It is deeply disrespectful and insulting to the ancient and expansive emotion of Jewish desire to think it could be satisfied through the violent acquisition of land. I refuse to project my yearning for *Olam Ha-ba* onto land that should not and could not ever physically or spiritually belong to me in the ways I've been taught. I refuse to allow my longing to displace, fragment, and hurt. A diasporic existence allows us to keep on moving and desiring towards a liberatory home that is not-yet. I, along with many others, dream and feel Zion as what it *could* represent within a diasporic imaginary; as a home that is not necessarily bound to land but that rather exists in time, in future, in relationships, in touch, in ritual, and in connection. In shared exile from christian, straight, colonized time and space we turn towards others who are also in exile and become as a collective. **Shabbos, in this context, acts as a home that nourishes the radical potential of diaspora, serving as a site of connection and allowing us to feel home in the glimpses of *Olam Ha-ba* that we immerse ourselves in every week.**

By collapsing time, Shabbos situates our performances between the present and the future. Thus, Shabbos allows us to experiment with the diasporic experience of existing *in between*. In diaspora studies "here" and "there" are taken to represent two distinct national formations: "here" as the current place that a diasporic person lives and "there" as the place towards which their longing is oriented. In a Jewish Zionist context, the desired and longed for "there" is the State of Israel and the "here" is the here of diaspora. I ask these questions from an American-Jewish perspective, which while complicated by my Israeli identity, nonetheless feels true for me: How can I *feel* and *be* at home "here" if I am not indigenous, when I am actively occupying land that is not mine, and am in a sense unassimilable into the christian hegemony of the nation? How can I *feel* and *be* at home "there" for similar reasons?

I believe that glimpses of pleasure, safety, comfort, love, and home that are not-yet-here exist in the liminal space of the in-between. We become our "not-yet" selves in the in-between and it is in between the present and the future, *Olam Ha-ze* [this world] and *Olam Ha-ba*, sitting around a Shabbos dinner table holding my love's hand,

[5] Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 30.